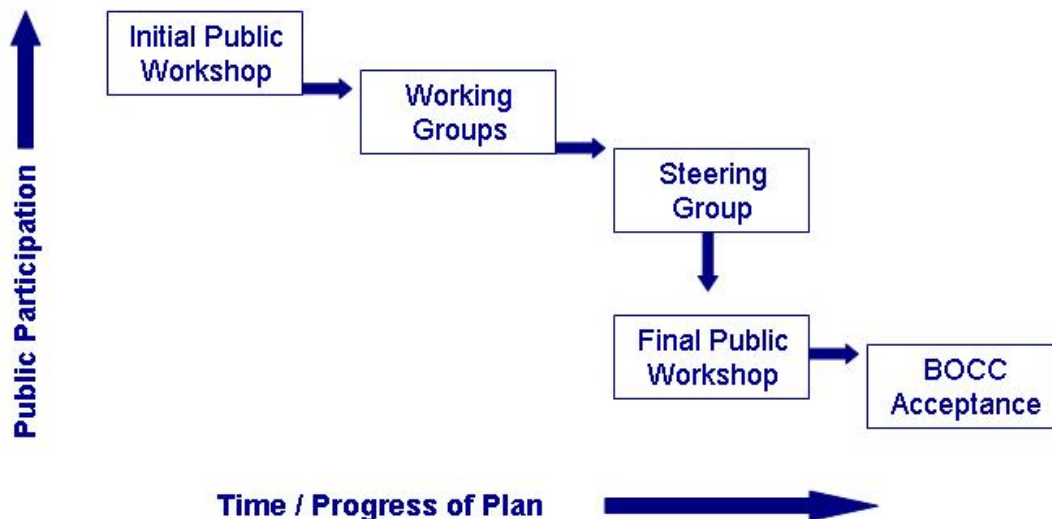


Public Involvement

The Navarre Town Center Plan did not have a public involvement component; the Plan itself was directed and developed by the public. The process described in the prior section illustrated this. Working groups were open to all who wished to participate; no one was appointed to these groups. Everyone who chose to attend the meetings was given equal opportunity to participate. Although attending and participating in meetings was the most effective way to be involved in the process, citizens were provided with several other methods of keeping informed and providing input.

The formality of the public involvement did change over the course of the process. Early in the plan, public involvement was very informal. An easy exchange among all present was encouraged in the initial public workshop and in the working group meetings. As the project progressed, input from the public was more formalized and comments were received at specific points in the meeting. For example, at the Steering Group meetings, the public was invited to attend and make comments, but the bulk of the discussion occurred among the Steering Group members, their advisors and staff. A graph illustrating the evolution of public involvement in the process appears below.



Public input at the final public workshop was very formal. Speakers submitted request forms and forms for written comment were provided. Displays were set up describing the plan recommendations and participants were encouraged to view the displays and make written comments prior to the presentation and official public comment period. A log of speakers and the topic they addressed is included in the Appendix B. A log of written comments is also included.

Each working group meeting was advertised and publicized using different mediums. The Navarre Press, the local weekly paper, ran a weekly advertisement describing which working group was scheduled to meet. Advertisements were run in the Navarre Press for both public workshops and the Board of County Commissioners October 28, 2004 meeting for two weeks prior to those meetings. Press releases were sent to both the Pensacola News Journal and the Northwest Florida Daily News (based in Okaloosa County) for each meeting. The Pensacola News Journal regularly ran notice of the working group meetings in the Neighbors section of the daily paper.

The press was an extremely vital part of this project. A reporter from the Navarre Press was present at almost every working group meeting. The weekly consistently ran articles and editorials regarding the project.

All meetings were also advertised on the Santa Rosa County official website. The County created a page dedicated to the Navarre Town Center Plan. All meeting dates, agendas and meeting summaries were posted on the website, which was updated at least weekly.

Planning staff also took advantage of communicating with working group participants and steering group members through email. Meeting reminders, and often agendas, were sent to email distribution lists for each of the different groups. In addition, periodic updates were also sent to a broader informational email distribution list with over 125 contacts to keep those not able to participate in the groups abreast of what was happening.

The Navarre Town Center Website (http://www.co.santa-rosa.fl.us/santa_rosa/zoning/ntcp.html) played a greater role in public involvement and information dissemination than simply serving to advertise meetings. The website was a hub of information and will continue to be updated throughout implementation. In addition to agendas and meeting summaries, presentations from all the working group meetings were posted on the website. As maps were developed, they were posted as Adobe Acrobat files on the site. Toward the end of the process, as recommendations were developed, the website was updated weekly with additions and changes to the recommendations. The updates emailed to the distribution list were posted for viewing by those who had not yet requested they be added to the list.

The website was used not only for information dissemination, but also to collect public comment and field questions. A dedicated email link on the website directed questions and comments to appropriate Planning & Zoning staff. The website also listed traditional contact information for the convenience of users.



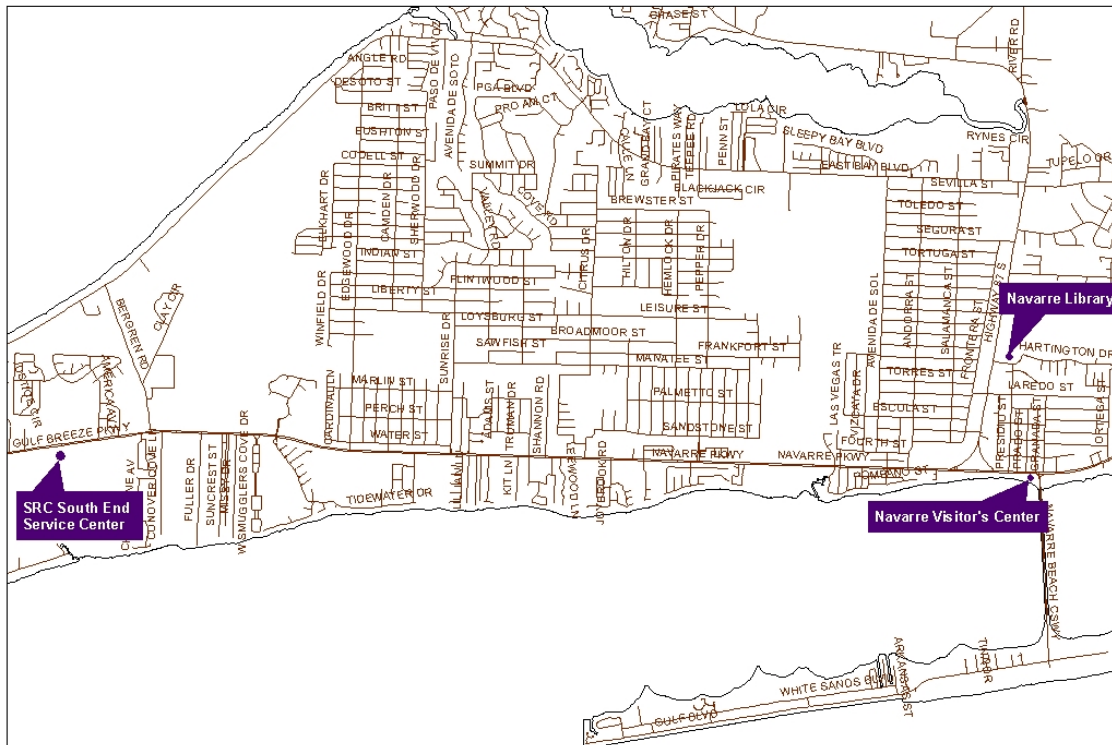
Finally, as the process drew towards a completion before the public workshop, staff created informational kiosks, brochures and mail-in comment forms for placement in strategic locations in the Navarre area. The kiosks displayed maps and key recommendations of the plan. The brochures provided at the kiosks included background information as well as maps and recommendations. Mail-in comment forms, which could be tri-folded and mailed to the Planning and Zoning Office were also available at the kiosk locations. Those locations were:

- Navarre Library on James Harvell Road
- Navarre Visitor's Center and Chamber of Commerce on US98 near the Navarre Beach Bridge
- South End Service Center on US98 near the Gulf Breeze Zoo

All the chosen locations were publicly accessible during normal business hours. The locations are also frequented by the public, so that those who had not participated or heard much about the plan might see the display and become more educated. The displays were also located geographically to be convenient for those most directly impacted by the plan. The kiosk locations are shown on a map below.



Navarre Town Center Plan Information Kiosk Locations



Overall, there were over 800 volunteer hours recorded during this project. More than 100 people participated in the working groups. From April to August, 21 working group meetings were held. The Steering Group met 6 times from July to September. Over 100 people attended the initial public workshop and almost 90 attended the final public meeting, even though the community was on alert due to Hurricane Ivan. More than 150 brochures were distributed in September and October, prior to BOCC consideration.

The level of public involvement and public participation in this plan is unprecedented in Santa Rosa County. Such a high level of public involvement is uncommon in the majority of planning efforts all over the State and nation. The open nature of the meetings, the variety of sources of information and the participation of the local media empowered the Navarre community. This empowerment will be the force that drives the Plan through implementation.